

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010*

**Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony**

*November 24, 2010*

*The President.* Please, everybody, have a seat. Good morning.

*Audience members.* Good morning.

*The President.* I have my two trusty assistants here—[*laughter*]—Malia and Sasha, for one of the most important duties that I carry out as President.

Before everybody heads home for Thanksgiving, there is one official duty I am sworn to uphold as the leader of the most powerful nation on Earth. Today I have the awesome responsibility of granting a Presidential pardon to a pair of turkeys. Now, for the record, let me say that it feels pretty good to stop at least one shellacking this November. [*Laughter*]

This year's national turkey goes by the name of Apple, and his feathered understudy is appropriately named Cider. They are being presented today by the chairman of the National Turkey Federation, Yubert Envia—and I want to just point out that Yubert seems very comfortable with that turkey—[*laughter*]—as well as the man who helped raise and handle them since birth, Ira Brister. Where's Ira? There's Ira. Give Ira a big round of applause for raising such outstanding turkeys. I want to thank you both for joining us here at the White House.

Now, Apple and Cider came to us from the Foster Farms Wellsford Ranch, just outside of Modesto, California. Out of about 20,000 turkeys born at Foster Farms this summer, 25 were selected for a final competition that involved strutting their stuff before a panel of judges with an eclectic mix of music playing in the background. [*Laughter*] It's kind of like a turkey version of "Dancing With the Stars"—[*laughter*]—except the stakes for the contestants was much higher. [*Laughter*]

Only one pair would survive and win the big prize: life—[*laughter*]—and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, where they've been living it up on corn feed at the W hotel. The W hotel has really been putting them up—[*laughter*]—it's great advertising. [*Laughter*] It makes you want to stay at the W. [*Laughter*] And after today, Apple and Cider will spend their retirement at the same beautiful place our first President spent his: Mount Vernon, Virginia.

So later this afternoon, our family will also deliver two turkeys who didn't quite make the cut to Martha's Table, which is an organization that does extraordinary work helping folks who are struggling here in DC. And I want to thank the good people at Jaindl's Turkey Farm in Orefield, Pennsylvania, who have now donated these turkeys 2 years in a row.

Now, this, of course, is what's truly meant by Thanksgiving, a holiday that asks us to be thankful for what we have and generous to those who have less. It's a time to spend with the ones we love, and a chance to show compassion and concern to people we've never met. It's a tradition that's brought us together as a community since before we were a nation, when the ground we're standing on was nothing but wilderness.

Back then, the simple act of survival was often the greatest blessing of all. And later, President Lincoln declared the first National Day of Thanksgiving in the midst of the Civil War. During the depths of the Great Depression, local businesses gave donations, and charities opened their doors to families who didn't have a place to celebrate Thanksgiving. In times of

war, our military has gone through great lengths to give our men and women on the frontlines a turkey dinner and a taste of home.

So in America, we come together when times are hard. We don't give up, we don't complain, and we don't turn our backs on one another. Instead, we look out for another and we pitch in and we give what we can. And in the process, we reveal to the world what we love so much about this country.

That's who we are. And that's who Thanksgiving reminds us to be. So I hope everyone takes some time during this holiday season to give back and serve their community in some way. And I also want to take a moment to say how grateful I am to the men and women who are serving this country bravely and selflessly in places far away from home right now. You and your families are in our thoughts and in our prayers, and you make me so very proud to be your Commander in Chief.

So on behalf of Michelle, Sasha, Malia, and myself, I want to wish everybody a wonderful and happy and safe Thanksgiving. And now it is my great honor, as well, to give Apple and Cider a new lease on life. So as President of the United States, you are hereby pardoned from the Thanksgiving dinner table. [*Laughter*] May you have a wonderful and joyful life at Mount Vernon.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. All right.

[*At this point, the President, Sasha, and Malia left the podium to approach the turkey. As they approached, the turkey gobbled.*]

*The President.* You see? He made a little noise to thank me. [*Laughter*] Let's go take a closer look at him.

*National Turkey Federation Chairman Yubert Envia.* Mr. President, I'd like to introduce Apple.

*The President.* That's some kind of waddle. All right, you have my blessing. [*Laughter*] You want to touch him on the back of the head? You want to touch him? Not really?

[*The President began to pet the turkey.*]

*The President.* Yes, buddy.

*Mr. Envia.* You keep doing that he's going to fall asleep.

*The President.* Now, can somebody explain to me what the whole waddle thing is about?

*Mr. Envia.* The whole waddle, that's how they dissipate heat.

*The President.* That's how they dissipate heat?

*Mr. Envia.* They don't have sweat glands, so all the blood rushes to the waddle, and that's how they dissipate heat in the wild.

*The President.* Interesting. I guess we're glad we have sweat glands. [*Laughter*] Otherwise, we'd be carrying these around.

This feels pretty good, do you want to try it? No? No.

All right, thank you very much.

*Mr. Envia.* Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Thank you.

*The President.* Have a good life, man. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

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